6: Thomson K-3 (1883-1884)1887
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sandals, they chose a handsome shield of buffalo hide, beautifully made, elliptical in shape, and warranted to stand a tremendous blow from a spear. The price being asked, a bullock was mentioned as the very lowest cost price. But the unfortunate maker had to be content with a scraggy sheep—and a blow. This purchase accomplished—for the Masai never *make* shields or spears, though there is nothing in the possession of which they pride themselves so much—they returned to the kraal, and then called for an El-konono. This is an inferior race kept in servitude to the Masai, for whom they make spears and swords. They do not go to war, and are not allowed to intermarry with their superiors. They all speak Masai, though it is believed they have a language of their own. In response to the call a miserable, half-starved object appeared with a selection of most murderous-looking weapons. After a careful examination Moran selected a spear, with a blade two feet and a half long, a wooden handle fifteen inches, and a spike at the end about one foot and a half. The blade had an almost uniform width of from two to three inches, up to near the top, where it abruptly formed a point. A sword and a knobkerry of formidable appearance completed his warlike equipment.

These important acquisitions made, our hero now proceeded to dress himself up as became his new character. He first worked his hair into a mop of strings, those falling over the forehead being cut shorter than the rest. Instead of the ivory ear-stretcher hitherto used, he put in a swell ear ornament formed of a tassel of iron chain. Round his neck he put a bracelet of coiled wire, and round his wrists a neatly formed bead mitten. On his ankles he bound a strip of the black hair of the *colobus* (monkey) of Central Africa. A glorious layer of grease and clay was plastered on his head and shoulders. This completed, he donned a very neat and handsomely decorated kid-skin garment, of very scanty dimensions, which served to cover his breast and shoulders, but hardly reached below the waist, and thus stood forth the complete military masher, ready for love or war.

And now the great step of his life was taken. Thus far he had lived in the kraal of the married people, and accordingly had to comport himself as "only a boy." Now he proceeded to a distant kraal in which were none but young, unmarried men and women. To keep up his dignity and supply him with food his father provided him with a number

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of bullocks. Reaching the kraal, our friend found himself among a large number of splendidly built young savages—indeed the most magnificently modelled men conceivable. And here let me for a moment pause in my story to indulge in a passing word of description.

There is, as a rule, not one of the El-moran under six feet (I am speaking of a superior clan). Their appearance, however, is not suggestive of great strength, and they show little of the knotted and brawny muscle characteristic of the ideal Hercules or typical athlete. The Apollo type is the more characteristic form, presenting a smoothness of outline which might be called almost effeminate. In most cases the nose is well raised and straight, frequently as good as any European's (though passing into the negro type in the lower class, such as Wa-kwafi). The lips also vary from the thin and well-formed down to the thick and everted. The eyes are bright, with the sclerotic whiter than is common in Africa. The slits are generally narrow, with a Mongolian upward slant. The jaws are rarely prognathous, while the hair is a cross between the European and the negro, rarely in pile, but evenly spread over the head. Hair is scarcely in any case seen on the face or any part of the body. The cheek-bones are in all remarkably prominent, and the head narrow both above and below. The teeth and gums of almost every one are such as I have already described, though I think I have neglected to mention that the two lower middle incisors are extracted. Tattooing is not practised; but every Masai is branded with five or six marks on the thigh.

Such are the main characteristics of the El-moran; but before we resume our narrative let us note a few facts about the young damsels—the Dito—who are seen to be flirting with our lads.

Happily facts support the verdict of gallantry when I say that they are really the best-looking girls I have ever met with in Africa. They are distinctly tall, like in both manner and physique. Their figures are slender and well formed, without the abnormal development about the hips characteristic of the negro. They shave, like the men, the dark gums, and the bad sets of teeth. The hair is shaved off totally, leaving a shiny scalp. As to dress, they are very decent, and almost classical, if a stinking greasy hide can have anything to do with things classical. They wear a dressed bullock's hide from which the hair has been scraped. This is tied over the left shoulder, passing under the right